

Trump was President and he was arguing that Democrats should join him, would be a disaster. Well, if anything, that is an understatement.

Just yesterday, one top forecaster said that “a failure to raise the debt limit will have serious negative consequences.” So in the immediate future, we need to raise the debt ceiling again. As in previous instances, it must, must, be a bipartisan endeavor, and the reason is simple: We have to get this done.

But much of the recent debt we need to pay for was incurred during the Trump administration. In fact, President Trump added nearly \$8 trillion to the national debt, \$5½ trillion of which was since the last time the debt limit was suspended until Trump’s final day in office.

So, in other words, \$5½ trillion of this debt is totally under Republican management, in a sense, because Trump was the President and Leader McConnell was the majority leader. Democrats think that we got that. That is when the debt was created, with Republican votes—lots of Republican votes. Both sides, led by a Republican Senate, as I said, incurred much of this debt. Senators from both parties overwhelmingly voted in support of the many laws that contributed to this obligation. So neither party can wash its hands of responsibility to pay the bills.

Leader McConnell keeps talking about the new spending the Democrats have done. That is not this debt. This debt, \$5½ trillion, was all under Trump and when McConnell was the majority leader. Leader McConnell was the majority leader.

Some Republicans recklessly, irresponsibly, so overwhelmingly politically seem eager to push our economy to the brink of total catastrophe by suggesting they will oppose any effort to raise the debt ceiling. And rather than urging their colleagues to immediately drop this reckless idea, the Republican leader—shame on him—seems to be giving it his blessing, if not promoting it.

If the United States defaults on its debt, it will harm every single American in this country, including potentially those who rely on Social Security and the members of our military. The consequences will reverberate around the world and will cause irreparable harm to the global economy at a time when we are all working to lift ourselves out of a once-in-a-century pandemic.

So any efforts to play nasty, political games with the full faith and credit of the United States is reckless, irresponsible, and despicable. It could pose permanent damage to the U.S. economy and is a complete nonstarter.

In America, when it is time to pay the bills, we do it without exception.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

DEBT CEILING

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, here is a quote to start the day:

I do think we’re in very serious danger of repeating almost all the mistakes of the 1960s and early 1970s.

That is Larry Summers, the senior advisor to two Democratic Presidents, about the risk of inflation we face today.

As one report explained:

The former Treasury secretary has been warning since February that President Joe Biden’s big-spending agenda was creating the risk of an inflation spike this year, potentially cutting into the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Oh, but Washington Democrats have spent trillions—trillions—of dollars on pet liberal projects. They have been printing and wasting money like there is no tomorrow, and American families are hurting as a result.

Inflation has more than overtaken the average worker’s wage growth since last year. Employers are raising wages higher and higher, but their workers’ paychecks go less and less far. Families’ incomes and savings are eroding right before their eyes.

Democrats have done this proudly—proudly—on a party-line basis. Back in 2020, during the teeth of the COVID emergency, Congress worked across party lines to pass massive rescue packages that Republicans and Democrats had written together. Virtually every serious expert agreed that after the last relief bill that we passed in December, the economy was primed and ready to go.

But our Democratic colleagues wanted more. Like they admitted from the start of the pandemic, they wanted to use the crisis to “restructure things to fit [their] vision” [from a temporary emergency to permanent socialism].

They bragged the bipartisan bill they passed in March was the most leftwing legislation in American history. Now they want to dwarf that bill with a reckless taxing-and-spending spree that would cost trillions more and bury the country in job-killing tax hikes.

When it comes to spending and the economy, President Biden, Speaker Pelosi, and the Democratic leader have made a conscious decision: They don’t want Republican-governing partners. They want to go it alone. Well, with one exception—just one exception.

No, Republicans won’t have any input into the massive, reckless tax-

ing-and-spending spree that will stick middle-class families with higher costs, lower wages, and a socialist country they didn’t vote for.

But Democrats do want Republicans’ help with just one thing. They want us to help raise the credit limit to make it happen. They want us to help clear the path for their partisan, job-killing agenda, which we oppose.

So let’s make this perfectly clear, in case anybody is in doubt. The debt suspension that just expired in August automatically covered the borrowing that had been accumulated before that date. This is the discussion about the future. This isn’t the last 4 years, when we were reaching bipartisan government funding agreements, bipartisan appropriations, and bipartisan COVID bills.

Democrats have made a different choice. They want to make policy all by themselves. So they can come up with the financing on their own as well. The Democratic leaders have every tool and procedure they need to handle the debt limit on a partisan basis, just like they are choosing to handle everything else.

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, now, on a completely different matter, providing for the common defense and protecting the American people is one of the fundamental responsibilities our Founders entrusted to the Federal Government. It is a core obligation of the Commander in Chief.

Yet, to a deadly degree, a parade of mistakes in Afghanistan tells us President Biden and his team have failed this most basic test of competence. For 20 years, the United States has successfully kept terrorists from staging another major attack on our homeland.

Over the years, we have reduced our own military presence in Afghanistan, secured greater assistance in foreign partners, and supported local Afghan forces who did the vast majority of the fighting. This strategy kept al-Qaida on the run. It kept the Taliban from taking control, and it kept Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven for terror.

In only a matter of months, President Biden and his team have squandered all of that—squandered it. The collapse we witnessed wasn’t inevitable. It didn’t happen on its own. It happened because President Biden pulled the plug on our Afghan partners and pulled the rug out from under our allies who were with us in this shared fight.

Everyone seemed to realize this is a historic disaster for the United States, except maybe the President and his loyal retainers.

Secretary Blinken points to the frantic evacuation of 100,000 desperate people as a huge success. Seriously? They initially didn’t envision having to evacuate anyone. The number of people evacuated is not a metric of success for